



Congressman Bill Thomas

22nd District, California

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Thomas Announces \$125,000 in Federal Funding for Ridgecrest Hospital

Ridgecrest Community Hospital will benefit from federal funding legislation when President Bush signs the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 into law. The bill, which was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate last Saturday, includes \$125,000 for the hospital to purchase radiology equipment. The funding was included at the request of Congressman Bill Thomas.

Specifically, the hospital plans to use the funds to help defray costs related to purchase and implement a Picture Archiving and Communication System known as "PACS." The PACS, which is also known as "film-less radiology," processes radiology images and other information in a digital format, so that they can be transferred to physicians and health care providers for immediate review and interpretation. The PACS will allow the hospital's emergency department 24-hour access to a radiologist. In addition, physicians will be able to view radiology images related to patients from bedside computers, nursing stations, family conference rooms, and offices. The PACS will also eliminate the need to transfer patients in some instances, help reduce costs and maximize resources, and assist the hospital in its efforts to recruit and retain physicians.

"The PACS' most important benefit will be to enhance the level of health care available to East Kern residents by allowing local physicians to quickly consult with specialists located hundreds of miles away," Thomas said. "I was pleased to secure this funding; when the next closest hospital is 90 miles away, every second counts."

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 will now be sent to President Bush for his signature.

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For additional information you may contact David Mechtenberg, CEO of Ridgecrest Community Hospital, at (760) 446-3551.

Billthomas.house.gov